nadp

National Association
of Deafened People

A few tips for successful communication with deaf people

Before you speak to me

- **Attract my attention** by calling or waving, or by tapping my shoulder.
- **Make sure I can see your full face**, not just the side view. Please don't turn away whilst talking to me.
- A hearing aid will amplify background noise as well as your voice so it helps to turn off the TV or radio and **move away from noisy machinery** etc.
- **It is better if we are both at the same level** – either both sitting or both standing.
- **Don't get too close** – the ideal distance is 3 to 6 feet.
- Please be sure to position yourself so that the **light from a window or lamp is on *your* face.**

How to speak to me

- **Make eye contact**.
- **Don't speak too fast** but do keep the natural rhythm of speech.
- **Speak clearly** but don't exaggerate.
- **Speak up a little but don't shout** – it distorts your face.
- **Keep your hands away from your face**, and don't smoke or eat whilst talking to me.

1 in 7 people in the UK have some form of hearing loss so you'll certainly have a chance to use some of these tips!

How to make sure I understand

- **The topic of conversation should be clear at the outset.** *Lipreading is partly guesswork – and it's a lot easier for me to guess a word if I know what you are talking about!*
- **Think about what you are going to say** – vague half sentences will not make sense to me.
- **Pause briefly at the end of each sentence** to give me time to work out what you have said.

When you speak to me

Write things down if necessary, especially complicated directions, names, addresses and numbers as these are hard to lipread accurately.

Repeat yourself if asked, and if I'm still unsure of what you have said, try rephrasing the sentence as different words may be easier to lipread. Don't just repeat a single word as whole phrases are easier to understand.

Body language, natural gesture, fingerspelling and basic sign language may all help. Facial expression is also very important.

Book communication support if needed. Such support includes **speech to text reporters**, **lipspeakers** and **BSL interpreters**. See the information booklet on the NADP website.

As lipreading is hard work and requires much concentration, please don't expect me to keep it up for hours on end!

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Please be patient. Take time to communicate with me and never say "It doesn't matter."

It matters a lot to me!

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